

OF
PRAYERS
FOR THE
DEAD:

Whether the *Practice* and *Tradition*
thereof in the CHURCH be truly
CATHOLICK; and a competent
Evidence of *Apollolick Original* and
Authority?

Humbly rendred to the Considera-
tion of the Right Honourable the JUDGES,
and of the Gentlemen of the Honourable Pro-
fession of the LAW:

With a PREFACE concerning the *Reasons*
thereof, and the *Concern of the Nation*, that the
Differences about Religion be better con-
sidered, in order to a more firm Foundation of
an *Honourable and lasting P E A C E*.

L O N D O N,

Printed in the Year, 1699.

PRAYER

FOR THE

DEAD

Whether the Holy Spirit be
in the hearts of the
Catholics and the
Protestants of the
same name.

Humble request to the
Council of the Holy Spirit
and of the Holy Church
in the year 1545.

With a prayer for the
souls and the
in the year 1545.

Printed in the year 1545.



To the Right Honourable John Lord Summers, Baron
of Evesham, Lord High Chancelour of England;
Sir John Holt, Lord Chief Justice of the Kings-
Bench; Sir George Treby, Lord Chief Justice of the
Common Pleas; Sir Edward Ward, Lord Chief
Baron; and the rest of the Honourable Judges.

May it please Your Lordships.

Though at first to some it may seem strange and improper
to offer a Theological Controversie to the Consideration
of Magistrates, and Judges of Civil Causes; yet if
the present Constitution of the Church of England, the Nature
of the Question, and the Special Qualifications of the Persons for
the Consideration of such a Question, besides the Common Con-
cern of all States and Persons in Matters of Religion, be well
consider'd, nothing can be more reasonable: A Church pro-
fessing, and glorying in the Profession, of a Religion Established
by Law; and so intirely subject to the Authority of the State,
that it cannot call a Synode, choose a Bishop, Dean or Prebend,
make a Canon, or alter any publick Prayers of the Church with-
out it; a Question of Prescription, Usage, and Custom, than
which were are more frequently examined, tryed and determined
in our Civil Courts; and, by consequence, no Persons more pro-
per to give a Judgment upon such a Question, because none
more versed and expert in Cases of that nature than those of
the Honourable Profession of the Law. Besides, Your Lord-
ships, and the rest of that Honourable Profession, have another
Qualification indispensably requisite to a just and true Judg-
ment,

ment, Indifferency and Freedom from any special Prejudice, more than what is common to the whole Nation, and as much above that as any Persons in it; I mean that of Education; by which, tho' the inconsiderate Vulgar, and People of little Judgment, are very strangely affected and moved, either fondly affecting, or childishly abhorring what hath nothing of real Good or Evil, but what proceeds from an abused or deceived Imagination; yet Men of Parts, Judgment and Experience can more easily extricate themselves out of the fetters and manacles of such Impressions and Prejudice upon consideration of sufficient Grounds and Reasons. But the Generality of the English Clergy, and Non-Conformists, are under a double special Prejudice and Pre-ingagement: the Authority and Credit of their Party; and their own in particular, having not only imbibed a Special Opinion in the Case, but inconsiderately asserted, and so espoused it also, besides the Prudential Caution of not disabliging or offending their Auditors: tho' many Protestants in other Parts are of another Opinion, and the most learned here have deserted the old Cause, both in their Disputes in the University, and in their Controversial Writings. And therefore, as every honest Man in any Difference would desire the Judgment of such as are most indifferent, unbiassed, and impartial, so every wise Man will desire that they may be Persons of most Ability, Skill, and expert in such Matters. And in both these respects I know none more proper to judge of this Case than Your Lordships, and the Gentlemen of Your Honourable Profession.

Nor is this all, that You are thus qualified to judge of this matter; but you have also a Concern, a double Concern in it; but, that it may be fairly and truly determined; a Concern which obligeth you to Impartiality, that the Truth may be cleared, and an End put to such Differences; both in regard to the Places you hold, and the Interest you have in the Civil State of the Nation; and in regard of your Personal Interest and particular Concerns both in this Life and hereafter. For Matters of Religion are of no little Importance to the Well-being of States, as well as of particular

particular Persons; and to the Well-being of particular Persons as well in this Life, as hereafter. And all this in a double respect; in respect to the Providence of God, and in respect of their Natural Efficacy and Tendency. It is very manifest, that almost all the Unhappiness, Troubles and Disturbance which this Nation hath suffered for more than 150 Years last past, have proceeded from unhappy Differences about Matters of Religion. And it would be as evident, if duly considered, that there is as little Likelyhood, if Possibility, of any long Continuance of Peace without some proper Application to so fatal a Root of Mischief amongst us, for the Eradication or Suppression of it. Nor is this so vain, unreasonable, or impracticable a thing to be thought on or attempted, as most Men are apt to presume upon the Unsuccessfulness of the Attempts which have been made, if better considered. It is no unusual thing for Men to learn from the Errors of former Attempts so to correct their Methods and Measures, as to accomplish with ease what others with great Labour were unable to effect. Many things in Practice are like Riddles in Speculation, which, after many have found insoluble by their utmost Study, appear at last, when the Secret is once revealed, very plain and easy to the meanest Capacity. But in such Differences as these there is usually a double Secret; the one Supernatural, managed by invisible Ministers of the Divine Providence; the other Natural and Humane, proceeding from Error of the Understanding, or Corruption of the Will and Affections in one or both of the Parties: And for the most part there are Faults on both sides, if not from the beginning, at least in the Progress and Continuance of the Difference. For it is no infrequent thing for such as have a Good Cause at first, to spoil it in the Management. And such is the Case in these Differences in Religion, which have so long infested this part of the World: Wherein the Supernatural Secret is the Operation of those Invisible Powers by the Commission or Permission of God, for Correction of what was and is amiss in the several Parties, among whom they arose; the Consideration of which belonging more properly to Divines, I shall say

nothing of it here. But of those Differences, the first and most considerable are those between the Roman Church, and those who pretend a Reformation. And the Natural and Humane Secret in them lies in certain Faults on both sides. The Faults and Scandals of the Papacy and Court of Rome were so gross and notorious, that all good and intelligent People groaned for a Reformation long before Luther was born. But the Faults of them, who pretended to that Work, will appear, when well considered, no less, neither in Number, nor Nature: There is none of them all that is not notoriously guilty of Sacrilege, Schism and Heresie; besides divers Unchristian Practices to promote or maintain their Party. It is even natural to Men to run out of one Extream into the other: and the Evil-Spirits, when they are permitted, cease not to instigate the corrupt disposition of Men to the utmost they can. Hence have proceeded those many endless Differences among themselves, who at first differed only from the Church of Rome: And their Faults and Miscarriages are so notorious, that they are many of them confessed, acknowledged, and disclaimed by divers of the most learned of all Parties. The English Reformation, which was not faultless before, was further corrupted by Cranmer, (who, tho by some magnified as a Martyr, will appear in time to have been so mischievous an Instrument both in Church and State, as makes him very unworthy of any honourable Character or Memory in any part of the Catholick Church, but especially that of England) and settled at last thro the prevalence of a Party of Calvinian Sectaries, with such Abuses and Corruptions in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's Reign, as the most learned and eminent of the English Clergy have long desired and indeavoured what they could to rectifie, but have never been able to effect, or scarce dared to attempt it in any great Matters, being abused and bug-bear'd with popular Outcries and Imputations of Popery, (with which the People of this Nation have been very grossly abused) when ever they dared to assert or own any thing of the Primitive Genuine Christianity contrary to the Nations of that Faction; who have been pricks in their Eyes, and thorns in their Sides, both to Church and State;

ever.



ever since, by the just Judgment of God, for their Politick Compliances with the Corruptions of that pretended Reformation; which are in truth much greater than is believed or suspected by many good People, as I may possibly, by the Grace of God, shew more particularly in due time.

But for the present, to calm the Minds and stop the Mouths of such as may be offended at what I say, as briefly as may be, I shall only recommend to their Consideration, if they be Dissenters, the Expostulation of a late leading Man amongst them, Mr. Richard Baxter, to the zealous Anti-Papists, which, he saith, is written to try, if it may be, to promote our common Repentance, and to reform the **Nominal Mistaken Reformation** of those, who have sinned by *Extreams*; which, by the assumed Name of Reformation have wronged God, and the Truth, and Mens Souls, with the greater Advantage and Success. Thus of the Reformation in general in his Book against Foreign Jurisdiction, printed but little before his Death, Part 2. ch. 1. and ch. 7. he sets down together no less than seven summary Heads of False Charges and Wrongs done to the Papists by the Sectarian weak-headed part of Protestants, as he elsewhere calls them: 1. Some Men, saith he, do ignorantly charge some Errors on the Papists, which they are not guilty of: 2. or lay the Errors of some few upon the most: 3. Some make Errors, which are but *de Nomine*, to seem to be *de Re*: 4. and lesser Errors to seem Great: 5. Some take divers Truths to be Errors: 6. And some are ready to call some lawful Customs of the Papists by the Name of Popery and Antichristian: 7. Some would deny the Papists the common Civilities and Liberties which are their due, &c. And elsewhere he gives us part of a Catalogue of such rash Charges with an &c. to let us know that those are but part: How far Protestants mistake and rashly Charge them in the Doctrines of Predestination, Free-will, Grace, Merits, Justification, Redemption, Perseverance, &c. I, saith he, have freely shewed in my Catholick Theology, and End of Doctrinal Controversies, and *Ludovicus le Blank*, after Others,

hath excellently opened. Which is a plain Confession that in all those Differences, besides that about Antichrist, (which he does not at all approve) the Fault lies on the side of the Protestants and the Nominal Mistaken Reformation. And herein I know no Conformists, except Calvinian Sectaries, who do not agree with him, and those Others he mentions. And for Conformists, they may there see, without looking further, that there are and have been many amongst us of greatest Reverence and Name, (as he elsewhere expresseth it) who have thought the Differences as unjust and unreasonable on the Protestant side in divers other Particulars; such as Arch-Bishop Laud, Arch-Bishop Bramhall, Bishop Gunning, Bishop Sparrow, Bishop Parker, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Heylyn, Dr. Pierce, Dr. Saywell, Dr. Beveridge, Dr. Sherlock, Mr. Thorndike, Mr. Dodwell; all whom he particularly names, and indevours to answer: To whom might be added, for my purpose, Bishop Andrews, Bishop Cousens, Bishop Taylor, Bishop Forbes, Dr. Field, and divers other eminent learned Men in and since the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, besides divers now living. And a worthy dignified Clergy-Man of the City, in a Book lately printed, hath asserted that the Reformation was, and was to be, but an imperfect Work. By all which it is ease to be perceived, that the Cause of the Reformation is no such clear Cause, or infallible Truth, as is generally believed, by those who are educated in such a Presumption or Persuasion: Which might also justly be suspected from the Differences, which arose presently, and have been continued from the beginning with bitter Contentions between the Principal Actors in that Work, and their several Parties to this day; which are things manifest to all People in all Places, where any thing called the Reformation hath prevailed. But there are other Matters very observable in this Case, as several indirect Ends and Motives, which probably might be, and certainly were the Inducements to many of the Beginners and Promoters of it; the Irregular Manner in which it was managed and settled; the subtle Accommodations of the principal parts of the Work to recommend the Preachers, and gratifie

gratifie the People, but undermining the Honour of Christ, and the Power of Godliness, and settling the People in Presumption and Security upon a False Foundation; according to the Description of the Apostle, Speaking perverse things to draw away Disciples after them; and the Fruits and Effects agreeable thereunto; a plain Indication that it was not of God, but in the Nature of a Judgment, and that they knew not what they did, nor what Spirit they were of: which, tho' certain Truths, and very evident when looked into, yet are not so obvious to common Observation. Nor indeed, was I my self so sensible of much of them till after much Study and Indeavours to promote the Service of God, and Good of my Country, it all seemed to me to be under an Enchantment, so that no Good could be done: Whereupon considering the Fruits, according to our Saviour's Rule, upon a fair Invitation and Opportunity I resolved upon a Retirement, and a Review of the Reformation, the Root which produced no better Fruits: And coming to it with much Sincerity and Impartiality, I soon perceived all this that I have here said, and more, very clearly; and some things, which relate to the Civil State and present Settlement of this Nation; of which I soon gave an account to such Persons as I thought most proper, to acquaint His Majesty with it; to discharge my own Conscience, what-ever was farther done in it.

I do not deny but there was need of a Reformation of divers things: but none know better than your Lordships, and the Gentlemen of your Profession, how common a thing it is for Men, who have really a good Cause, to make it ill through Passion, Partiality, unreasonable Demands or Charges, and such ill Management as, if it come to Tryal, it must be found against them; or tho' it be not Good, yet through Partiality or Prejudice to think it Good; and then, when by degrees they have well fixed and rivetted that Opinion, and besides engaged their Reputation in it, to persuade themselves that those things are lawful for the Maintenance of it, which, in truth, are not; and those things useful or necessary, which, in conclusion, will but expose and ruine it: how much Mis-
chief

chief People thus affected frequently bring upon themselves and others, and endless Vexations, when obstinate in their Opinion, resolute in their Demands, and pertinacious in their Contentions, right or wrong: how undecent and unbecoming, even in Civil Matters, this appears to all wise and good Men, who have Opportunity to observe the Truth of the Case: On the other side, how much more Prudent it is, as well as Just and Honest, if a Man have the Misfortune to purchase an ill Title, or be unhappily concerned in an ill Cause, to endeavour to make it Good by fair Agreement with Parties concerned, and Tender of what is just and reasonable; and such honest Means as will at least secure his Reputation, if not his Cause also, however much mend the matter. This has been always my Practice, and this I am resolved to do in this Case, of what I have discover'd upon my Review aforesaid: I do utterly disclaim all the Iniquity of the Case that I have already discovered, or can discover, all the Sacrilege, Schism, and Herefie, and other Corruptions of the pretended Reformation in general, and of that of England in particular. And tho' I do not forsake the Corruptions of this Church to espouse those of another; yet I think fit to make my own Cause good, and to stand only upon such Terms, as I can comfortably refer to the Goodness and Mercy of God, and as I am satisfied will make it their Faults, not mine, who shall refuse Agreement and Communion with me. What I think prudent in my own Case, if it be so indeed, I could wish the whole Nation did see it as well as I: For I believe it a more firm Foundation for a lasting Peace and true Happiness than any other we can build upon. And if I be not mistaken in the Matters in Difference, there is scarce any but such, as many principal Men of the one side think ought to be yielded by them, or as all on the other confess may, for just Cause, be granted by them; or may be otherwise accommodated by only fit Explanations and Expressions. To which, since the most considerable on both sides have shewed a very good Disposition, and the Nature and Precepts of the Gospel, and the Peace, and Repose, and Common Good of Mankind, especially in this part of the World,

which

which may have a great Influence upon the rest, do require it; I believe it would be for the Honour and Interest of which side soever should do it, to make the Proposal, provided it be very just and reasonable. Of those Matters, which are thought ought to be yielded, this, which I propose to your Lordships Consideration, concerning the ancient Practice of Prayers for the Dead, is one, and the most proper Instance that can be in all respects. It is indeed a double Instance; for it is a plain Evidence, that one of the principal Suppositions, with which not only Multitudes of People in these last Ages, but ever since the first Ages of Christianity, have been deceived and misled, with very plausible pretence, is notwithstanding false in it self, besides fallacious misapplications of what is true: as appears abundantly by Irenæus, Tertullian, and the Common Practice of the Ancient Christians in their Contests with Hereticks and Schismaticks. And it is in its self one of the greatest Instances of the Power of Prejudice to abuse weak Men out of their apparent Interest, without any other competent ground or reason; of the Weakness of Men to be so abused; and of the Inconsiderateness of those who presume to be positive, and direct others in such Cases, that I know of.

My intention at first was to have published a Vindication of the True English Liturgy, the first Book of Ed. 6. composed by known English Clergy-Men, and afterward corrupted and disordered by Cranmer, and a Faction of Foreigners, and other unknown Calvinian Sectaries in Secret, and so craftily imposed upon the Church and Nation. But when I considered, in these unhappy Differences, how partially Zealous the Generality of Clergy-Men (who have any Zeal at all) are for their own Party, more than for the common Concerns of Religion, or of their Country; and how unconcerned the chief of the Clergy of this Nation are; and have been ever since the State assumed the Supream Power of Ecclesiastical Matters, as if either dispirited, or presuming that the Care also is incumbent only upon them who have assumed the Power; and how little I have found, by Experience, is to be expected.

(* * *)

expected from them; and, on the other side, how necessary notwithstanding it is for the Peace and Repose of this Nation, that the Occasions of such mischievous Dissentions should be better considered and removed; I presently perceived I had a fair Opportunity in this to present a proper instance of a Matter of such Importance to Persons as well qualified to judge, and who were likely to be as sensible of the Importance of it, as any; and thereupon concluded to present it alone to the Consideration of Your Lordships, and the Gentlemen of Your Honourable Profession; having already, as to the rest, made a considerable Experiment of what I have here said, of the Hopes we may have of a good Success, if they, to whom it doth belong, will but do what is in their Power towards it: For having published a Liturgy, Entitled, The Liturgy of the Ancients represented, as near as well may be, in English Forms, not much different (only a little more compleat) from that Restitution of the True English Liturgy attempted by the Scotch, with the Assistance of the Principal of the English Bishops, Anno 1637. I presented it to some of the principal learned Men first of the English, who much approved it, and wished it restored by Law; then of the Lutherans, who also approved it, and declared their Satisfaction to communicate in that Form; and, at last, of the Roman Catholicks, who had no Exceptions to the Matter or Form of it. And, in short, to say the Truth, the Abuse and Corruptions of the Publick Liturgy in these two particulars, Of Prayers for the Dead, and the Christian Sacrifice, to mention nothing more, are so gross and notorious, that they alone are sufficient to make the Church of England inexcusably Guilty of Schism, and justly obnoxious to Excommunication, (which may be the Enchantment it seems to lie under) and unsafe for any pious Person, after notice, to hold Communion with it: so that it seems not only expedient and prudent for the State to consider these Matters, (for otherwise nothing is to be expected from these Bishops) but absolutely necessary: And so I leave it with Your Lordships.

Your Lordships most Humble Servant.

Of the Practice of Prayers for the DEAD

In the Christian Church.

THE Performance of any good Offices for the Dead, even to their Bodies, their Bones, their Memories, their Wills, &c. hath always been reputed a very commendable thing among all civilized Nations; and whatever hath been acted to the contrary, barbarous, and inhumane; and the only Neglect of such Offices by such as were under any special Obligation, of evil consequence; as if Mankind had some secret sense that Separate Souls were sensible of the Kindness or Unkindness of those who survived them, and had some power to gratifie or revenge the Kindness or Injuries, especially of their Relations, and such as they had any special Interest in in their Lifetime. And if such inferior Offices to their Bodies and Memories have been so reputed, much more may such good Offices, as *Prayers for the Souls departed*, deserve commendation. And accordingly it hath been always commonly practised, by all Nations, Gentiles, Jews, Mahometans, and Christians; and that without any known Beginning: but very probably by Tradition from the common *Parents of Mankind, being very agreeable to Nature, and confirmed by Apparitions.

And certainly this is a thing so innocent, so free from all appearance of Evil, so desirable both for ones self and their Friends, that it is very strange that any, especially good People, should be persuaded, nay frightened from it; and much more that any should so presume, upon their own Opinion and Conceit, as to offer to per-

* Concerning Matters transmitted from them, and received by the Gentiles. See Mr. Dodwell's 2d Letter, § 8.

suade them so contrary to the Practice of the whole World in general, and of the whole Catholick Church, without clearer Evidence in so obscure a Case, as is that of the middle State of Souls to us Mortals: which is not to be believed could ever have been without some secret Energy of those Powers of Darknes, which have effected greater Mischiefs than this by the same Instruments.

It is the Practice of the Jews at this day, and has been so without any known beginning: was so before our Saviour's time, as appears by the Book of *Maccabees*, and their ancient Form of Prayer, which, 'tis said, they used in the Captivity, still extant in their *Talmud*; and never was reproved by our Saviour, or any of his Apostles, or of the Primitive Christians.

It is the Practice of the whole Catholick Church at this day, and of all Christians, except such as according to the unanimous Sentiments of the Ancients are gone, and are, out of it; and hath been so without any known beginning, in their most solemn Worship; so that no Church can be assigned where they, who scruple at it now, could have had Communion without it: And never was opposed, contradicted, or questioned by any one of any Reputation in the Catholick Church; or by any one at all for near 400 years.

The first, who is known to have questioned it, was *Aetius*, in the time of *Epiphanius*, a Presbyter, a frantick, proud, conceited Man, discontented because he could not get a Bishoprick, and thereupon, 'tis probable, quarrelled not only at divers Practises of the Church, but at Episcopacy it self: an ill Man by the Judgement of all; and *Epiphanius* and St. *Austin* reckon him in their Catalogues of Hereticks for his Opposition of this Practice especially.

The next, whose Testimony is produced in this Cause, is one *Stephanus Gobarnus*, an obscure Scribler, and a confessed Heretick, even by *Usher*, who alleadgeth his Testimony, as well as by *Phosius*, from whom he takes it, and who gives this Character of his Book, that it seems a Work of much Labour, but little Profit; and a Study rather of Applause and Vain-Glory, than any great Usefulness. It was a Collection of the different Sentences of the Fathers in divers points of Doctrine, and alleadged to prove such a Difference of Opinions in this Case, and what was the true Sentence of the Church. A special Witness, and to much purpose! an Heretick to prove the true Sentence of the Church! and a vain-glorious Person, who, out of Ostentation of Parts and Learning, seeks for Differences in the Fathers, and sets himself up for a Judge: which

which he might, if he had pleased, have done also in the Scripture it self. But after all he doth not so much as declare his Opinion in the principal Question in this Case, but only in a by-point. A poor Cause that stands in need of such Supports!

If we set him aside, as well we may, who is neither a competent Witness of the Sentence of the Church, nor doth declare his own in this Case, we find not another in near 700 years after *Aerius*, till *Peter de Bruis*, and one *Henricus*, a runagate Monk, who took up a Trade of Preaching, and spent what he got in Gaming, and on Harlots: They denied also the Baptism of Infants, the Christian Sacrifice, Publick Churches, &c. against them *Petrus Cluniacensis*, a Man eminent for Learning and Sanctity, wrote, and St. *Bernard* preached, and confirmed his Doctrine with so great a Miracle, as convinced Multitudes, who had been seduced by them. After these arose one *Waldo*, a Citizen of *Lions*, very rich, but unlearned, who probably had a Zeal for God, but not according to Knowledge, and attributing too much to his own Opinion, procured certain Books to be written in his own Language, and distributing his Estate among the Poor, took upon him the Apostolick Office of Preaching, and began the Sect, called after his own Name, *Waldenses*; and from their Place and Quality, *The Poor of Lions*. Among other Heterodox Opinions, (whereof some were peculiar to their own Sect, and disallowed by all others) this of rejecting Prayers for the Dead was one.

The *Apostolici* of that time, I suppose, were not a distinct Sect, but the same, who assumed that Name. And the *Albigenses*, who in the next Century encreased very much, till by the secular Power and force of Arms they were suppressed, seem to have been a Branch of the same Root; however, in this particular they agreed, as they did in most others.

Since those, I know not any Sect which hath arisen, and which questioned or contradicted Prayers for the Dead, till those which have sprung out of what is called the Reformation: For I do not find that *Wickliff*, and his Followers here, the *Lollards*, or *John Huss*, or *Hierom of Prague*, who carried his Books and Doctrines into their own Country, and were all three Men of Parts and Learning, ever opposed Prayers for the Dead, tho' among the Opinions attributed to *Huss*, one is, that there is no Purgatory Fire; which is denied by others, who yet are for Prayers for the Dead. But by all the several Sects of the later Reformers, since *Luther* began,

they have been questioned, opposed, and left out of their Publick Prayers.

Only here in *England*, in the first Liturgy, composed by *English* Clergy, in the Reign of King *Edward 6.* which I therefore call *The True English Liturgy*, the ancient Prayers for the Dead were retained, both in the most Solemn Office of the Daily Sacrifice, and at Funerals: But these and other principal Parts of the Liturgy were soon after new-modelled in a clandestine manner by *Cranmer*, *Bucer*, and other Foreigners, and *Calvinian* Sectaries; and craftily imposed upon the Church and Nation: And the Abuse is continued to this day.

This is the true *Original and Succession of all the Opposition* which hath ever been made to this Practice, of all Mankind in general, and of the whole Catholick Church of Christ; by Hereticks, Sectaries, and Schismatics, and the meanest of all those; not a Man amongst them of any Eminence for Piety, or any Virtue, or so much as Parts or Learning: much less any Man of Note in the Church: much less any Church, Party, or Part of the Catholick Church, who were; or who continued in Communion with The Catholick Church, or any Particular Catholick Church, as they anciently distinguish'd them from the Assemblies and Associations of Hereticks, and Schismatics in the same City. It is very observable, wonderful, and a great Evidence of unquestionable or undeniable Truth, that in so many Ages, when there had been so many so considerable Parties of Hereticks and Schismatics, and so malicious, spiteful, and enraged, as many of them were against the Church, that none of the most considerable of them should ever seek to advantage their Cause by such a Question; which doubtless they would not have failed to have done, had they apprehended any color of Truth or Advantage in it: that none in all the Parts of the World should ever oppose it but such an obscure, inconsiderate and inconsiderable Generation of People, till the late Reformers sprung up, who thought they could never reform enough, or pick quarrels too much, till they had brought that, which might have been a considerable Cause, if well laid and managed, to an indefensible brable. Amongst them indeed there have been many Men of sufficient Learning; but, but few of that Ingenuity, Impartiality, freedom from Prejudice, temporal Interest, or Fear of Displeasing, and of that Generosity, as to assert the Truth plainly, without respect of Persons or Parties: and those few have been very much born down
(among

(among us especially) by the Violence and Headiness of Parties and Factions. Yet such is the Power and Evidence of Truth in this Case, that it hath found Advocates amongst the most learned of all Parties.

Of this I think it not improper to produce an instance or two in this Place: The first shall be an eminent Person both for Learning and Virtue, Bishop Forbes, the first Bishop of *Edenburg*, promoted by King *Charles 1.* who is reported to have said of him; That he had found out a Bishop, who deserved that a See should be made for him. In his *Considerationes Modestæ, Controversiæ de Purgatorio*, cap. 3. §. 17. coming to speak of Prayers and Oblations for the Dead; *Sed hic primum, &c.* But here first, saith he, is to be reprov'd the Opinion of some rigid Protestants, who do altogether censure and condemn Prayers for the Dead; because they find no Precept or Example of such Prayers in the Old or New Testament. Certainly even those, who are most against it, dare not deny that it is a most ancient Custom, and most (universally) received in the whole Church of Christ, that in the Publick Prayers of the Church Commemoration should be made for the Dead, and Rest be prayed for to God for those who died piously, and in the Peace of the Church. And having cited divers of the Ancients for it, he adds: This most ancient Custom was full of Piety, and most truly did Cassander say, "This was always fixt in * All * Christian Minds, That the Spirits of those, who being initiated in the * Note. Then this was agreed among All. Sacrament of Christ, departed this Life in the Confession of his Name, with signification of Repentance, should be commended to the Mercy of God, that Remission of Sin, Eternal Rest, and a Part with the Elect, might be intreated for them. † And altho' concerning that State of † This second part is so cited in Usher, p. 246. as is apt to lead the Reader into mistake, as if they were not agreed in more than the Author did intend. Souls, for which those things were profitable, it was neither sufficiently manifest, nor agreed among all, yet all judg'd this Office, as a Testimony of Charity toward the Deceased, and a Profession of Faith concerning the Immortality of Souls, and Resurrection to come, to be grateful to God, and profitable to the Church. Then he saith, This most Ancient and Universal Custom of the Church very many and most learned Protestants do not disallow; and cites the *Apology* of the *Augsburg* Confess. *Chemnicus*, *Mentzerus*, *Luther*, *Gerard*, *Urbanus Regius*, *Vorstius*, *Vossius*, *Dr. Field*, *Bishop Andrews*, and passing over in silence very many others, as he saith, he recites the Words of the Liturgy of *Edward 6.* both in the Office for the Communion, and that for Burials; laments that such most ancient and pious Prayers should, by the Persuasion of *Bucer*, and others, be expunged; and wisheth that the Church of *England*, which hath shewed great Moderation

in

in many other things of less moment, had rather conformed her self in this business, as also in some others, to the most ancient Custom of the Universal Church, than for some Errors and Abuses, which had by degrees crept in, plainly rejected it, and wholly taken it away, to the great Scandal of almost all other Christians.

I need add no more after this Learned and Apostolick Bishop; only, in short, take notice of what *Urbanus Regius* saith, that *Nones* reject it but *Epicureans* and *Sadduces*; and *Vorstius*, that *No Good Man* can dislike it; and Bishop *Andrews*, that *There is little that can be said against it*; and conclude this matter with the Words of the learned and famous *Hugo Grotius*; *The use of Praying for the Dead, received through all Churches of the East, no less than of the West, ought not to be condemned.* And after some reasons for it, and something concerning the Jews, he adds, *The Ancient Liturgies are not to be condemned, since Christ himself did never reprehend the Prayers for the Dead, commonly used among the Jews; of which there is a Form extant in the Talmud, made, as is believed, in the Babylonian Captivity, and mentioned in the second Book of the Maccabees.*

It will be replied, That as great a Man, and of the Church of England, as any of those, hath written against it, the famous *Usher*, Arch-Bishop of *Armath*. It is very true he hath, and imploied and strained all his Learning, all his Parts, and all his Skill, and a little too much, to oppose it; and all to very little purpose for his own Cause, but to very good purpose against it: For it is a great Evidence and Demonstration of what Bishop *Andrews* truly said; That *there is little that can be said against what this great Man takes such pains to oppose.* The sole Question between him and his Adversary was, *Whether the Fathers of the first 400 or 500 Years held that Prayer for the Dead is both commendable and godly?* as appears by the Challenge, which was in those very Words, and no other. How, and where, doth he answer this plain Question? His Title of that part of his Answer is general, *Of Prayer for the Dead.* He saw well enough how little he had to say to that plain Question; and therefore resolved to take more Liberty, to say something of the matter of his Title, tho little or nothing to the Question. He spends three score and ten pages upon the general matter; but, if I mistake not, not ten lines directly and closely to the special Question. * Which is to abuse, not so much his Adversary, as his Reader, with a specious appearance of an Answer, which, in truth and reality, is nothing to the purpose. That which comes nearest to the purpose

* To use his own words p. 170. He alledgeth indeed a number of Authorities to blear Mens Eyes with all; which being narrowly looked into will be found nothing at all to the purpose.

is what he saith, pag. 246. *These Two Questions, saith he, must necessarily be distinguished: Whether Prayers and Oblations were to be made for the Dead? and, Whether the Dead did receive any peculiar Profit thereby? In the latter of these, he (the Reader) shall find great Difference among the Doctors: in the former, very little, or none at all.* This is indeed to the purpose: but his Resolution of the former Question, tho' very true, is a plain Confession against himself. For if they be agreed that Prayers and Oblations were to be made for the Dead, then certainly they held that that was commendable and godly; which is all that his Adversary did affirm then, and that I do principally assert now: for what I have to alleadge farther, is but a Consequence of that. And his Resolution of the latter Question is manifestly false, and a disingenuous Assertion: for if among so great a number of Doctors in so many Years he could have assigned five, or six, or ten, who had really differed in that point from the rest, (which those few he cites rightly understood did not) had that been a *Great Difference*? And if some Authors do say, that some, or that many, in their time, were doubtful in the point, is that a sufficient proof that it was *still a Question in the Church*? when they name not one Person in particular, much less any Doctor, nor tell us so much as of what quality they were, who had those Doubts. When a *Difference* is *Great*, there must be some proportion between the Contenders: and where a *Question* is continued, there must be some Disputes, Contentions, or Debates. But if Peoples secret *Doubts* must be taken for *Questions in the Church*, that is the ready way to bring all Religion into question: and it is not to be doubted but such dealings in Controversies hath had its share in producing this growth of Scepticism and Atheism of late. That such a Man as this should put Colours upon Causes; should hold up Contentions; should be so addicted to Parties, as in favour to them to confirm People in Opinions, which if false are mischievous, and if true of little Advantage, and contrary to so great Authority as is on the other side; and so expose his Judgment or Integrity, is a great Unhappiness to himself, and a Scandal to others.

It is possible, what others may have observed in this great Man (for 'tis a scurvy thing to be engaged in an ill Cause) may have taught them more Wisdom; for, for ought I can find, as well in the Controversial Writings of late, as in the Disputations at the University, the Old Cause, *An Preces pro Defunctis sint Licite?* is quite

quite deserted, and that Question is turned into another, *An Preces pro Defunctis antiquitus usurpata inferant Purgatorium Papisticum?* It is well Men have learned so much Wisdom for themselves, as to mend their Cause so far as that; and it is to be wished, that they may also learn so much Honesty, as to undeceive the People, and restore to them, for themselves and their Friends, the Comfort and Benefit of that ancient Catholick Practice. Mr. Thorndike, one of the learnedst Persons this Church hath produc'd, and a late Bishop of St. Asaph, have done well to do what they could, and restore it upon their own Tomb-stones, tho' they could not do it in the Church: and if all who believe well, would but do so well, as profess what they believe, which certainly they ought to do, we should soon see the Truth revive and flourish beyond Expectation; and so, much of our Contentions abated.

Thus concerning the Persons who have opposed this Practice, and set up themselves against the Authority of the whole Catholick Church. I come now to consider *the Opposition it self*, their Allegations and Reasons. Such is the Wit of Man, and the Subtilty of Satan, that scarce any Truth is so evident, but they can find out some specious Appearances to set up against it. But such is the Mercy and Wisdom of God, that he hath provided sufficient means for Direction for all such as keep within the Bounds of Humility and Obedience; that is, in Subjection not only of their Wills, but also of their Intellects and Understandings, to his Orders, Ordinances and Prescriptions, the very Business of their Lives in this World, for Preparation for another. And to such, besides the Common Means, he will kindly vouchsafe a special Guidance sufficient for their Circumstances. Of the Danger our Saviour and his Apostles have given to all fair Warning, and great Caution; acquainting us with the End, why the most Wise and Gracious God permits it, for Tryal and Exercise; the Danger and Subtilty of the Ministers of Satan, such as should deceive, if it were possible, the very Elect; the special Marks to know and avoid them, *viz.* Their Fruits, specious Pretences, (Sheeps Clothing,) and Distraction and Disagreement among themselves, crying, *Here is Christ, and There is Christ*; and special Directions, *Believe them not, Go not out after them.* All this Provision hath the Devil attempted to undermine, partly by raising real Scandals and Offences, and partly by strongly representing Imaginary ones. But against all this Humility and Charity will fortifie us; and the Grace, special Guidance and Mercy of God

God will preserve us, if we be careful to continue in those Graces. It was Pride, and Arrogance, and Discontent in *Aerius*, which gave the * Devil Advantage to instigate him to the first Opposition of such a Catholick Practice. It was Pride, Vanity, and Ostentation of Parts, by which he set *Gobarnus* to work to shew his Learning and Acuteness in finding out Differences of Opinions among them, who perhaps in many of those things differed no more than the Writers of the Sacred Scriptures seem to do. For I do not find that he made any special Opposition against this Practice. But I doubt it was not imaginary, but real Scandal and gross Abuses of a good Practice, by which *Waldo* and his Followers, and the *Albigenses*, were moved to oppose all without Distinction: tho' there seems to have been in him, with a Zeal for God, but without Knowledge, a Mixture of Pride and Conceitedness. And it was real, and not imaginary Scandal, by which *Luther* was at first moved to oppose Indulgencies, and his Followers at first to oppose even this innocent and commendable Practice. But in such Men as *Usher* and *Bucer*, it was the Reputation of the Cause they had espoused in gross, and Compliances with the Times, and their particular Interests, by which they were moved. But let us but carefully follow our Saviour's Admonitions and Directions, wisely distinguish the Ingredients of the Composition of Truth and Falshood, and honestly imbrace, hold fast, and own the Truth, when we have the Opportunity, and we shall not want sufficient Light and Evidence to find it.

The *specious Appearances* set up against this Catholick Practice of the Church of Christ are these: 1. That there is no Scripture Authority for it. 2. That the Ancient Practice was to Pray for all, such as were at Rest. 3. That the Ancients were not agreed in their Opinions concerning the State of Separate Souls, or the general Intention of the Church in those Prayers.

To detect the Fallacy, Falsity, and Impertinence of these Allegations, as briefly as may be: To the *first*, I say, it is a meer Fallacy, and grounded upon a false Supposition, that nothing is to be admitted in Doctrine or Worship but what there is *Scripture Authority* for, if it be understood of a *special Authority*; and their usual Pretences of not Adding, or Diminishing, are to be understood of those particular Parts or Books of the Scripture, as is plain by the Additional Writings and Practices of Holy Men afterwards. 2. It

* το δὲ πρῶτον
διαβόλον ἢ τὴν
ἐκκλήσιαν, &c.
Epiphani. p.
905. a.

is inconsistent with the Tradition of the Doctrine, and Institutions of the Gospel, and of the Ordinances of the Apostles, which were all by Word and Deed, without Writing, as the Common Laws of this Nation were at first settled: and much of what was written, was written upon special Occasions, and much with that Brevity and Conciseness, by the special Providence of God, as was sufficient for them for whom it was intended, and yet so as should need an Authentick Explication to preserve the Authority of the Catholick Church. 3. It is contrary to the expresse Directions of the Scripture, to contend for the Doctrine once delivered to the Saints, in general, and to hold the Traditions they had received, whether by Word, or Epistle, &c. And if it be understood of a *general Authority*, the Allegation it self is false: For it is contrary to all those Scriptures, which declare the Authority of the Church, and require Obedience to Superiors: And either way it is contrary to the Sentiments, Testimony, and Practice of the Ancient Christians, who, in Questions of Difficulty and Contests with Hereticks, always inquired, not only what was written by the Apostles, but also, or principally, what was delivered by them to the Churches, which they founded, in all Parts of the World, of which the Catholick Church doth consist, which the Scripture it self styles the Pillar and Basis of Truth, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. v. *Grot.* not only for the Sense and Meaning of the Scripture, as Lawyers, with good reason do, when in doubts about the Construction of Writings they inquire how the Usage hath gone; for in that case the Writing is the Principal Evidence: but in this case, what was delivered to the Churches, which were compleatly and plainly instructed and ordered by the Apostles, was the principal Inquiry, and the Scriptures but an accessory Evidence, as our Year-Books are of the Common Law, in Questions concerning the Common Law. But I doubt not but there was a special Providence in it, that so much was written, and no more, and that it was written in such a manner. Lastly, This hath been the Practice and Pretence of Hereticks and Schismatics, in all Ages, to the intent with the better colour to set aside the Authority of the Catholick Church, that they might so make way to set up their own private Opinions and Conceits in the Place thereof; but never more grossly, nauciously, and scandalously, than by some of the Principal of the late Reformers, *Calvin* especially, on the one side, inculcating and crying up *The Pure Word of God*, *The Pure Word of God*; and on the other, abusing it, by straining and

wresting it to serve their own turns, and eluding and evading what is plainly contrary to them; which is now past all doubt, not only by the Confessions of Mr. Baxter and *Le Blank*, but the many of all Parties, who have deserted divers of those Assertions, which were so hotly contended for under that specious Pretence: a plain Evidence and Demonstration that they were no better than their Predecessors in that Pretence. But besides all this, what I am now doing, if I be not much mistaken, will be a particular demonstration of the Truth of what I say.

To the other two Allegations, I say, they are both impertinent to the Question under consideration here; which is only concerning the Matter of Fact and Practice; I do not say that they are impertinent to the Subject in general, to be considered upon other Occasions; but to this special Question: and therefore to insist upon them in this Case, instead of directly answering to the Question, is fallacious, captious, and an abuse to the Reader, to impose upon him, distract him, and withdraw him from the proper Question. There might be Difference in Forms, and various Intendments, and all consistent. Certainly there was no such Difference or Variety either of Forms or Intendment, as there is this day amongst Protestants of both, in their greatest Solemnity of the Sacrament. But if the matter of Fact be certain, it may be in the Power of the Church to order the Form, and at Liberty for every one to construe the Intention, or make his Inferences or Observations for his own Use, as well as of the Scripture. And the Matter of Fact is granted by the very Allegation: Nor indeed is it much denied by any Men of Learning. *Scio esse pervetustam hanc precandi pro piis defunctis consuetudinem*, saith Bucer in his Censure; and after he had a little indeavoured to put off Tertullian, S. Cyprian, and Dionysius, he adds, *Sed sit hic quantumvis vetustus Dionysius; Et sit hujus atque aliorum S. Patrum autoritas quantumlibet magna: attamen nostrum est tanto anteferre omni humanae auctoritati divinam, quanto Deus omni homine major est, & sapientia, & nostri charitate, docendique nos omnia propensione.* Jam orare pro Defunctis nulla docent Scriptura, siue verbo, siue exemplo. Et vetitum est quicquid his adicere vel detrudere, Deut. 4. & 12. Solet nobis objici, says Peter Martyr, Ecclesiam semper pro Defunctis orasse; quod quidem non inficio; sed assero illius facti, neque Verbi Dei, neque Exempli, quod defunctis ex Sacris literis auctoritatem habere, in 1 Cor. 3. fol. 45. Ed. Tig. 1579. Verum est quod Papista aiunt, says Bullinger, Dec. 4. Ser. 10. Veteres orasse & sacrificasse

pro Defunctis: Scio quid Doctor Ecclesia Insignis Augustinus, quid Eloquentissimus Chrysostomus, alique viri vetusti ac clari hac de re scriptum relinquerunt: Sed quero num hi rectè fecerunt? Scio damnatum fuisse Aerium, quod hujusmodi Orationes & Oblationes improbaret. Afferunt secundum Maccabeorum librum: Sed is nihil probat, cum non sit Canonicus: Adjiciunt & Traditionem Apostolicam: Sed mihi id non videtur; nec illi unquam in scriptis ita precipiunt. This is the Sum of the Case, and honestly said; and therefore I shall conclude this part with it.

Such is the Folly, Passion, and Inconsiderateness of Men, that they many times bring such Causes to Tryal, as upon their own shewing, and hearing their own Evidence only, appears to all intelligent and indifferent Persons to be against them. And such I believe will this Cause of these Men appear to be to all competent Judges, without more ado. Notwithstanding, for the more plain and full Conviction and Satisfaction of such as are less intelligent and more scrupulous; and that those Honourable Persons, to whose Consideration I present it, may themselves judge of the Evidences, which extort these Confessions from such as would elude them if they could, I will produce so much as is sufficient for the purpose: and that I be not tedious, I will forbear all that, which would prove it to have been a true Catholick Practice of the whole Church for above 1200 years last past, and confine my self to the time allowed and approved by the Church and State of *England*; that is, the time of the first four * general Councils, and that preceeding to the time of the Apostles; that is, from that to the Year of our Lord 451.

As for the succeeding Ages, to this day, that it was observed all along *per totum Orbem*, and therefore believed to have been delivered by the Apostles, as the most ancient Writers upon the Church Offices affirm, I presume no Man will deny; and therefore I shall only mention one Observation concerning those Ages: I have made all the Search that possibly I could, both by Manuscripts and printed Books, to discover the most ancient Forms of celebrating the Holy Eucharist in the *Latin Church*: and tho' I have met with divers Variations in other parts, yet I never could discover any Alteration in that: that is the principal part, and as Dr. Barlow, late Bishop of *Lincoln*, says, *the most innocent part* of the public Office, called *The Canon of the Mass*, since Gregory the Great, nor indeed by him; ~~therefore we may~~ believe the whole Canon is not of less Antiquity than *Gelasius*, or *S. Ambrose*, if not much ancienter, divers particulars of it being found in more ancient

save one little addition, but otherwise

Authors.

- *1. Of Nice,
Anno 325.
- 2. Constant.
Anno 381.
- 3. Ephesus,
Anno 431.
- 4. Chalced,
Anno 451.

Authors. It is not long since a very Reverend and Learned Bishop, since deceased, speaking to me of it, said, it was a *Noble piece of Antiquity*; and Dr. Barlow hath left under his hand a just Censure of one who cut that part out of an ancient Missel at *Oxford*, for an ignorant half learned Fellow. This alone is an ample Evidence of the Practice of all the *Latin Churches* for these Ages; which, from thence, I shall endeavour to trace back to its Original.

S. *Augustin* and S. *Paulinus* both lived within the time prescribed, and died 20 years before the last of the said four Councils, about *An. 431*. S. *Augustin* was a Person of great Natural parts, acquired Learning, Piety, Holiness, and of great Authority and Reputation in the whole Catholick Church, especially in the *Latin Church*, of which he is reckoned one of the chiefest Doctors. He had in his younger time taught Rhetorick at *Rome*, and afterward at *Millan*, so that he was acquainted with the World, as well as with Books, and every way as well qualified to bear his Testimony in the Case as possibly could be. S. *Paulinus* was a Person of great Quality and Estate, in great Esteem with the Emperor, and of so great Devotion, that, imbracing our Saviour's Counsel, he Sold all, distributed it to the Poor, and pious Uses, and betook himself to a strict Religious Life in Poverty, after he had been preferred to great publick Offices; he was a Man of Parts and Learning, and well acquainted with the Western parts, especially *Italy, France, and Spain*; and for his great Virtues and eminent Sanctity was, by the Importunity of the People, made Bishop of *Nola in Campania*: so that he also was every way qualified for another Witness in this Case: and these two I suppose sufficient for their time, especially for the *Latin Church*.

S. *Paulinus* in an Epistle to St. *Augustin* says as much as need to be in few Words; that * *It cannot be in vain that the Universal Church is accustomed to pray for the Dead*. Not the Church, but the *Universal Church*; not only did at that time, but was accustomed so to do; that is, time out of mind, without any known beginning. And what was it accustomed to do? Not barely to commemorate, but to pray and supplicate for them. *Universa pro Defunctis Ecclesia supplicare consuevit*. As ample a Testimony, I think, as can be expressed in so few words.

S. *Augustin* in confirmation of this aheadgeth the Book of *Maccabees*, and addeth, || *But altho' we did no where at all read this in the ancient Writings, yet is not the Authority of the Universal Church,*

* Vacare non posse, quod universa pro Defunctis Ecclesia supplicare consuevit, ap. Aug. de Cura pro Mort. pr.

|| Sed etsi nusquam in Scripturis veteribus omnino legere ur, non parva tamen est Universae Ecclesiae, quae

hac tu-
Aut
ubi i
bus fac
tis, quae
mino De
ejus an
fundant
locum suu
habet et a
Commenda
Mortuorum
S. Aug. de Cu
ra pro Mor
tuis, c. 1.

which.

* Hoc à Patribus traditum Univerſa obſervat Eccleſia, ut pro eis, qui in Corporis & Sanguinis Chriſti Communione Deſuncti ſunt, cum ad ipſum Sacrificium ſuo loco commemorantur, oratur, & pro illis quoq; id offerri commemoretur. S. Aug. de verb. Apoſt. Ser. 32. c. 2.

which is clear in this Custom, a ſmall matter, when in the Prayers of the Prieſt, which are poured out to the Lord God at his Altar, the Commemoration of the Deceaſed hath alſo its proper place. In this Teſtimony are divers things obſervable, and very conſiderable : 1. The Authority of the Univerſal Church, not of a Particular Church, of a City, of a Province, of Hippo, or Africa, but of the Univerſal Church, which, however manifeſted or declared, is no ſmall matter. 2. But in this it is declared, in the moſt Solemn Acts of the Church, her moſt Solemn Addreſs to Almighty God at his Altar. So that here is the greateſt Authority that is among Mankind, and that moſt ſolemnly declared. 3. It is no new Reſolution, but a Custom, Conſuetudo Univerſa Eccleſia, an ancient Custom, and a univerſal Custom, which he elſewhere upon another occaſion expreſſeth in this manner : * This being delivered from the Fathers (à Patribus traditum) doth the Univerſal Church obſerve, that for them who are departed in the Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, when they are remembred at the Sacrifice it ſelf in their place, Prayer be made, and it be commemorated that that is offered for them alſo. Not only for the Living, but for the Dead alſo, and in their proper place. 4. This Custom and Tradition, was not only for a general Commemoration, but for a ſpecial Commendation.

And here, becauſe this excellent Perſon hath written much, and therefore affords more obſervable matter than is ordinary in any one Author, I will endeavour out of him alone to preſent the honeſt and ingenuous Reader with a Scheme of the whole Custom and Practice of the Ancients, whereby he will the better underſtand their Teſtimonies, and decern the Fallacies, Eviſions, Cavillings and Shufflings of the Adverſaries of it. What was done by them on behalf of the Deceaſed was either Publick or Private : What was done in Private, was Prayers, ſuch as S. Auguſtin offered for his Mother in his Confessions, lib. 9. cap. 13. Faſting, and Alms, &c. What was Publick, was done either by the Relations or Friends of the Perſons deceaſed, and that was preſenting their Oblations, whether ordered by the Deceaſed, or freely offered by their Friends on their behalf : Which, if they departed in Communion of the Church were received, otherwiſe rejected, unleſs they were in the State of Penitents, and were ſurprized in ſuch caſe as the Prieſt ſhould have abſolved them, if he could have been preſent : or what was done by the Biſhop or Prieſt, with the reſt of the Clergy and People : And this was either a general Commemoration *pro omnibus*

omnibus in Christiana & Catholica Societate defunctis, as he speaks *de Cura pro Mat. c. 4.* for all departed in the Christian and Catholick Society, (or Communion) without any particular recitation of their Names, or a more particular Memory of them by Name with others; or a more special Commendation of a particular Person at his Death; and, besides certain other days, upon their Anniversaries. And these were all performed at the Altar, and with the Holy Sacrifice, except that at his Death, in case that happened after the Priest had eaten, and then by some Canons it was to be performed *solis Orationibus*, with Prayers only; but otherwise, & *Orationibus & Oblationibus*; that is, with Prayers and Sacrifice both, for that is there to be understood by *Oblationibus*. And as *S. Augustin* did intend all this in what he saith of the Universal Custom by Tradition from the Fathers, so did he believe that the Souls departed were benefitted by them all. For his words immediately preceeding those before-recited out of his *Serm. de Verb. Apost.* are, * *It is not to be doubted that the Dead are helped by the Prayers of the H. Church, and the Salutory Sacrifice, and the Alms which are distributed for their Spirits, that the Lord should deal more mercifully with them than their Sins have deserved.* This was one End and Benefit of those Commemorations and Prayers; and therefore was not only comprehended in the general Intendment of the general Commemorations, but was expressly prayed for both in the Common Prayers and in the more special Commendations, as we shall see further hereafter; but this does not exclude Others; of which, I think fit to take notice of one in this place, which is mentioned by *S. Austin* and others, and which concern two Articles of our Creed, but little understood or consider'd amongst us. It is in his Book *de Civ. Dei, lib. 20. cap. 9.* in these words: † *Nor are the Souls of the Pious deceased separated from the Church, which even now is the Kingdom of Christ: Otherwise, neither at the Altar of God should Memory be made of them in the Communion of the Body of Christ.* In these words is couched one general Intendment of the Church: For as the Holy Rite of the Eucharist was intended not only for the Peculiar Solemnity of the Churches Address to God here upon Earth, with the Memorials of our Saviour's Passion, the great Propitiation for the Sins of the World, but also for Communion between our Head and the Members of his Mystical Body here upon Earth, and also between the Members of his whole Mystical Body themselves; so the Church in that Holy Solemnity hath always performed Acts

* *Orationib. vero S. Ecclesiae, & Sacrificio salutari, & Eleemosynis, quæ pro eorum spiritibus erogantur, non est dubitandum mortuos adjuvari, ut cum eis misericordius agatur à Domino, quam eorum peccata meruerunt.*

† *Neq; enim piorum animarum mortuorum separationem ab Ecclesia, quæ etiam nunc est regnum Christi. Alioquin nec ad altare Dei fieret eorum memoria in communione Corporis Christi.*

of

of *Communion*, not only with the Head, but with all his Members, both present, in external *Communion*, and *Participation* of the sanctified Creatures; and with all absent, whether in the Body, or out of the Body, by *Commemorations*, Thanksgivings and Prayers. And because they were in several States, they were accordingly remembered distinctly, in order, which is what S. *Augustin* expresseth *suo loco*. This *Communion* was by the ancient Christians reputed a matter of very great Importance, and accordingly they were equally careful, whose Oblations they did receive, and whose Names they did remember, whether Living or Dead: and those who were ejected, or rejected or refused, were looked upon as out of *Communion*, and excluded from all the Privileges of the Church, both on Earth, and also in the separate State, according to our Saviour's Promise. It was then believed, that the Souls departed, which should be saved, were all indeed with Christ, but not at the Right-hand of his Father; but some before the Throne; some upon *Mount Sion*; some in the Holy of Holies; some in the Temple, but not in that place; some in Paradice, in *Abraham's Bosom*, in the Third Heaven, in very different Mansions or Receptacles: as one may be said to be with the King, who is with him in foreign Parts, tho' but in his Army, or at his Court, tho' never admitted into his Presence Chamber; and that by some the Church here upon Earth her self received much Benefit; but others received Benefit by her *Communion* and Prayers, and stood in need of it. Nor ought we to think that these two Articles of the *Holy Catholick Church*, and the *Communion of Saints*, were put into the Summary of the Christian Faith and Profession, and in the Order they are, but for special and weighty Reasons; and indeed such as are little taught, or understood, or regarded amongst us in this Age.

* Idemq; habet Ecclesiastica disciplina disciplina quod fideles noverunt, cum Martyres eo loco recitantur ad altare Dei, ubi non pro ipsis preter, pro cæteris autem commemoratis defunctis oritur. Injuria est enim pro Martyre orare, cujus nos debemus orationibus commendari. And Tr. 84. in Evang. Johan.

S. *Augustin* hath many Testimonies concerning this matter of Fact and known Practice of the Church in these distinct Orders of Commemoration of the Dead, so plain, that the Arch-Bishop himself could not but confess that in the Church Service there was made a several Commemoration; first, of the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, after one manner; and then of the other Dead, after another; pag. 194. and one or two he cites in the Margin, but was so wise as not to recite the words. It is *Serm. 17. de Verbis Apost.* * This hath the Church Discipline, which the Faithful know, when the Martyrs are recited at the Altar of God in that place, where Prayer

is not made for them ; but Prayer is made for others, who are commemorated. For it is an Injury to pray for a Martyr, to whose Prayers we (our selves) ought to be commended. And Tr. 84. in Evang. Johan. * At the Table it self we do not so commemorate them, as others who rest in Peace, that we should also pray for them, but rather that they pray for us, that we may tread in their Steps ; because they themselves have fulfilled that Charity, than which our Lord saith there cannot be greater.

And here I cannot but take notice of the Partiality and Disingenuity of this magnified Man in this place ; for it is a Scandal and Offence to me. Having cited the words of S. Augustin in Euchrid. ad Laurent. cap. 110. || That the Oblations and Alms usually offered in the Church for all the Dead that received Baptism, were Thanksgivings for such as were very Good ; Propitiations for such as were not very Bad : but for such as were very Evil, altho' they were no Help for the Dead, yet were they some kind of Consolations of the Living. He calls this a Private Exposition ; not only (as he pretends) because it is not to be found in the Writings of the former Fathers ; but also because it suiteth not well with the general Practice of the Church, which it intendeth to interpret, p. 194. If it had not been in the Writings of any of the former Fathers, had not the notorious Practice of the Church, which he often mentions with special notes of the Notoriety of the matter of Fact, been sufficient, and much more than any thing mentioned dogmatically by others, tho' more ancient ? But besides that is false : for we shall see it hereafter attested by Cyril of Hierusalem ; and not by the by, but in a professed Description, and Explication of the Greek Liturgy ; which shews the Agreement of all, both Greek and Latin Churches. And therefore it is but reasonable that the honest Reader be admonished to beware of this Author, how he trusts him : for he is a partial and crafty Writer ; of which other instances may be produced.

But perhaps it may not only do right to S. Augustin, but be a Satisfaction to the Reader, to see him more fully declare his mind, which he doth in the words precedent, to this effect : * Nor is it to be denied, saith he, that the Souls of the Deceased are relieved by the Piety of their living Relations, when the Sacrifice of the Mediator is offered,

* Neque regandum est Deum. Quorum animas pietate suorum viventium relevari, cum pro illis sacrificium Mediatoris offertur, vel Eleemosynæ in Ecclesia fiunt. Sed eis hæc profunt qui cum viverent, ut hæc sibi postea prodesse possent, meruerunt. Est enim quidem vivendi modus, nec tam bonus, ut non requirat ista post mortem ; nec tam malus, ut ei non profint ista post mortem. Est vero talis in bono, ut ista non requirat ; & est rursus talis in malo, ut nec his valeat, cum ex hæc

* Ad ipsam mensam non sic eos commemoramus, quemadmodum alios, qui in pace requiescunt, ut etiam pro eis oramus, sed magis, ut orent ipsi pro nobis ; ut eorum vestigiis adhæreamus ; quia impleverunt ipsi charitatem, quam Dominus dixit non posse esse majorem.

|| Cum sacrificia five altaris, five quarumcunque Eleemosynarum pro baptizatis defunctis omnibus offeruntur ; pro valde bonis gratiarum actiones sunt ; pro valde malis, et si nulla sunt adjumenta mortuorum, qualicumque vivorum consolationes sunt.

vita transie-
rit, adjuvari.
Quo circa
hic omne
meritum
comparatur,
quo possit
post hanc vi-
tam relevari,
quiescere, vel
gravari. Ne-
mo autem
se speret
quod hic neg-
lexerit cum
obierit, apud
Deum pro-
moveri. Non
igitur ista
quæ pro de-
functis com-
mendandis
frequentat
Ecclesia, illi
Apostolicæ
sunt adversa
sententiæ, qua
dictum est ;
Omnes enim
astabimus an-
te Tribunal
Christi, ut re-
ferat unus-
quisque secun-
dum ea quæ
per corpus ges-
sit sive bonum,
sive malum :
quia etiam
hoc meritum
sibi quisque
cum in cor-
pore viveret
comparavit, ut ei possent ista prodesse.

Non enim omnibus profunt, & quare non omnibus
profunt, nisi propter differentiam vitæ, quam quisque gessit in corpore ? Cum ergo sacrificia &c.

¶ Sed quia non discernimus qui sint, oportet ea pro regeneratis omnibus facere, ut nullus
eorum prætermittatur, ad quos hæc beneficia possint & debeant pervenire. Melius enim su-
pererunt ista eis, quibus nec profunt, quam eis deerunt quibus profunt. Diligen-
tius tamen facit hæc quisque pro necessariis suis, quod pro illo fiat similiter à suis, p. 294. b. 2. ro 4.

or Alms given in the Church for them. But to those are these things pro-
fitable, who, when they lived, merited that these things might be profitable
for them afterward. For there is one sort of Life neither so Good, that it
might not need those things after Death; nor so Evil, that they cannot
profit after Death. But there is such in Good, that it may not require
them : and there is again such in Evil, that it cannot be helped by these
things when this Life is ended. Wherefore here is all Merit acquired,
whereby any one can after this Life be relieved, or grieved. But let none
hope that he may obtain of God after he is Dead what he hath neglected
here. Wherefore those things, which the Church doth frequently use for
Recommending the Dead, are not contrary to the Sentence of the Apostle,
where it is said, We must all stand before the Judgment-Seat of
Christ, that every one may receive according to those things which
he hath done in the Body, whether it be Good, or Evil ; because
even this Merit every one acquired for himself when he lived in the Body,
that these things might profit him. For they do not profit all. And why
do they not profit all, but by reason of the Difference of Life which each
lived in the Body ? When therefore Sacrifices, whether of the Altar, or
of whatever Alms, are offered for all the Deceased, who were baptized,
&c. as before recited by Usher. More to like purpose may be seen
in his Book *de Cura pro Mortuis*, cap. 4. and cap. 18. where he adds,
|| But because we do not distinguish who they are, (who are profited by
them) we ought to do these things for all the Regenerate, that none of
them be pretermitted, to whom these Benefits may and ought to come. For
it is better that they should be superfluous as to them, who are neither
helped nor hurt by them, than be wanting to those whom they may benefit.
Yet every one doth these things the more diligently for his (deceased) Re-
lations, that the same may be done by his Relations (surviving) for him-
self. The same he hath qu. 2. ad Dulcitium : and more to like pur-
pose, *Serm. 32. de Verb. Apost.*

To the Testimonies of these two Eminent, Holy, Learned Bishops
of the *Latin Church*, I will add the Testimonies of two or three
Eminent Bishops of the same Age in the *Greek Church*, concerning
the Practice and Custom of the Church in their time, and the Ages

To this we may well apply what he saith before concerning *Easter*, the Observation of which was another thing, which *Aerius* quarrelled at : But who knows these things best ? This seduced Fellow, who is but newly sprung up, and now living amongst us ; or they who were Witnesses before us ; and who held the same Tradition in the Church before us, which they had received from their Parents, and their Parents had learned from their Ancestors ; as the Church to this day observes the true and sincere Faith, which it received with the Traditions from the Fathers.

In all this we may observe, 1. The Practice of the Church, both in the General Commemorations, and in the Prayers, agreed on both Sides. 2. The End and Intendment of the Church, that it was the Profit and Benefit of the Deceased, also agreed. 3. The Question between them, Whether the Prayer of the Living could profit or benefit the Dead, as the Church intended ? 4. That this was what *Aerius* did principally deny : and therefore, that the Practice was reasonable, as a necessary consequence. 5. His only reason was, that it would make Piety and good Life needless. 6. *Epiphanius* his Answer, 1. from Reason ; 1. as it is a seasonable and excellent Declaration of the Faith and Hope of the Church ; 2. as an Act of Charity, for the Benefit of the Deceased ; 2. from Authority, as received in the Church by Tradition from our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit.

And now, how does our great Man elude this ? *Epiphanius*, saith he, doth not ~~Pr~~ame this, (*viz.* That Prayers and Sacrifice profiteth not the departed in Christ,) an Heresie. 2. Nor doth it appear that himself did hold that they bring such Profit to the Dead as these Men Dream, pag. 236. 3. He doth not at all charge him with forsaking the Doctrine of the Scripture, or the Faith of the Catholick Church, but with rejecting the Order, p. 237. 4. *Aerius* his Argument would have been in force indeed, if the whole Church had held, as many did ; That the Judgment after Death was suspended until the General Resurrection, and that in the mean time, the Sins of the Dead might be taken away by the Suffrages of the Living : But he should have considered, as *Gobarnus* (as great an Heretick as himself) did that the Doctors were not agreed upon the Point, p. 238. 5. It was a foolish part in him to confound the Private Opinion of some, with the Common Faith of the Universal Church. 6. That he reprov'd this particular Error, he did well ; but that thereupon he condemned the General Practice of the Church, he did like himself, headily and perversly, *ibidem*. As to the first of these, I must refer the Reader to

Epi-

Epiphanius himself, for the Character he gives of the Person and Opinions of *Aerius*, a very Vile man, a thorough-pac'd *Arian*, and who exceeded *Arius* himself in his new Opinions, which he imputes to the operation of the Devil; though he doth not particularly name them Heresies, yer, it is plain, he and *S. Austin* too accounted them such; and, of the rest, the Reader may judge by what is here laid plainly before him.

S. Ephraim was not much before these; but because he was neither *Greek* nor *Latin*, but a *Syrian*, and a Man of Parts and extraordinary Sanctity, greatly esteemed by the most excellent Persons of that time, and of so great Reputation, that his Writings were read publicly in divers Churches after the Holy Scriptures, I cannot pass him by without taking notice of his Testament, his Discourse to his Disciples upon his Death-Bed: wherein he tells them he is Dying, and desires to be mentioned in the Commemoration of their Holy Prayers; and bewailing his Sins, and declaring his Sense of the terrible Judgment of God, he doth admonish, exhort, and strictly enjoin them to remember him constantly, *after his exit and passage*, in their Prayers: and after some Admonitions to them, and account of himself, he again desires to be remembred in their Prayers. Then he strictly forbids his being Buried under the Altar, or in the House of God, all Solemn Pomp, and Funeral Orations and Encomiums; and all cost of rich Vestments, of Grave Cloaths, of Spices, of Odors, of Candles, and the like; but desires that all that Cost may be bestowed upon the Poor; and for himself; that in the place of all such Pomp and Funeral Orations, they will accompany him with Psalms, and help and assist him with their Prayers, and Bury him in the Church-yard, where the contrite in heart are Buried. Then he bids them come near and imbrace him, for his Spirit fails him, and again in-treats them diligently to make Oblations for him; and prettily represents the *Communion of Saints*, by a Simile of the Sympathy of things in Nature, the Wine which flowers in the Cellar, when the Vine Buds in the Vineyard, and the like: And tells them, that the Oblations of Priests under the Law were effectual for those who were slain in their Sins: and how much more the Priests of Christ under the New Testament! And gives great caution, that when they come to his Memory, (I suppose he means the Thirtieth Day, which he expressly mentioned before and his Anniversaries) *ne quisquam in Sancta peccet*; that none commit any thing unmeet for holy things, (by any Excess): but that the Vigil be kept attentively,

tively, and reverently, and humbly, and holily, and purely: for it would be a miserable thing for him, if by occasion of his Memory, he should be accountable to his God for their inordinate Actions. Thus this Holy Man: an Instance equal to a very ample Testimony of the Practice in those parts.

About the same time was S. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem. He in his *Mystagogick Catechism* concludes all with a Description and Scheme of the Liturgy then in use; wherein, after mention of the Holy *Trisagium* Hymn, * *Therefore, saith he, do we recite this Seraphick Theology delivered to us, that in that Celestial Hymnody we may communicate with the supra-mundain Militia, (the Heavenly Host:)* and thus by such kind of Hymns sanctifying our selves, we pray the most benign God that he will send out his Holy Spirit upon the proposed (Elements) that it may make the Bread the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ. For certainly, whatever the Holy Spirit doth touch, it is sanctified and transmuted. Then after that Spiritual Sacrifice, that unbloody Worship is done, (that is, after the Consecration and Oblation in Commemoration of the Passion of Christ) over that very Host of Propitiation do we obsecrate God for the common Peace of the Churches; for the Tranquility of the World; for Kings; for their Armies and Confederates; for the Sick and Afflicted; and, in sum, for all who need Help. We commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us: First, the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that God at their Prayers and Deprecations would accept ours: Then we pray for the Holy Father's and Bishops deceased; and, lastly, for all who are deceased amongst us, believing it to be a very great Help to the Souls, for whom the Obsecration of that tremendous Sacrifice, which is placed on the Altar, is offered.

I will add but one instance more for the flourishing times of the Church, and so comprize the whole time of the four first General Councils from first to last. *Eusebius* in his 4th Book of the Life of *Constantine* describing the *Martyrium* of the Apostles, built by him at *Constantinople*, adds, chap. 60. "All these did the Emperor

* διὰ τὸ τοῦ
τῶν ἁγίων
σαν τῶν ἐν
τῶν Σεραφίμ
θεολογίας τῶν
τῶν λατρῶν,
ὅπως κοινοῦ
τῆς ὑμνοδίας
ταῖς ὑποκοι-
μίαις γινώσκῃ
σφαιρίαις, καὶ
ἀγιάσαι τὰς ἐ-
κείναις διὰ τοῦ
πνευματικῶν
τότων ὁμῶν
παρεκκλησίου
τὸν οὐρανίου
πῶν Θεῶν, τὸ
ἀγιον πνεῦμα
ἐξαγαγεῖν
ὅτι τὰς ἐκεί-
ναις, ἵνα ποι-
ήσῃ, τὸν μὲν
ἀγρον, σῶμα
Κεῖν, τὸν δὲ
ὄντιν ἑμα Κε-
εῖν. πάντες γὰρ
ἐκείναις ἐκεί-
ναις τὸ ἀγιον
ποιῶμα, τὸ
ἐκείναις ἡ μα-
ταίως ἐκείναις.
εἴτα μετὰ τὸ
ἀγαθὸν ἵνα
τῶν πνευματι-

κλῶ θυσιάν, τῶν ἀταίμακτος λατρίαν ὡς τῆς θυσιᾶς ἐκείνης τὸ ἱλασμὸν, παρεκκλησίου τὸν Θε-
ον ὑπὲρ κοίτης τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν εἰρήνης, ὑπὲρ τῆς τῆ κόσμου εὐσεβείας, ὑπὲρ βασιλείας, ὑπὲρ σεβασμῶν, ἢ
συμμάχων, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκείναις, ὑπὲρ τῶν καίτοινομένων, καὶ ἀπαρτῶν, ὑπὲρ πάντων βουλήτων διαμα-
ρτων. ἵνα μνημονεύσῃ καὶ τῶν προκοιμημένων, πρώτων πατέρων, προφητῶν, ἀποστόλων, μαρτύρων,
ὅπως ὁ Θεὸς διχαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ προσεχέας προσέξῃ καὶ ἡμῶν τῶν διανοῶν. εἴτα καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν προκοιμημένων ἀ-
γίων πατέρων, καὶ ἀποστόλων, καὶ πάντων ἀπλῶς τῶν ἐκείναις προκοιμημένων, μετὰ τὸν ὅτιν αὐτοῖς
ἐκείναις ψυχῶν, ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀγαθῶν τῆς ἀγίας καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς προκοιμήτης θυσιᾶς.

“dedicate, that he might consign to Posterity the Memory of our
 “Saviour’s Apostles. But he had another Design in his Mind
 “when he built this Church: which was at first concealed: but
 “in the end it became known to all. For he had designed this
 “place for himself after his Death, foreseeing, by a transcendent
 “Alacrity of Faith, that his Body after Death should be made *Par-*
 “*taker of the Apostles Apellation*, that even after Death, he might be
 “esteemed worthy of the *Prayers*, which should be performed there
 “in Honour of the Apostles, believing that their Memory would
 “be *useful and advantageous to his Soul*. And afterward describing
 the Solemnity of his Funeral, *chap. 71.* he saith, that “a vast
 “Number of People, together with those Persons, consecrated to
 “God, not without Tears and great Lamentation, *poured forth*
 “*Prayers to God for the Emperor’s Soul*; thereby performing a most
 “grateful Office to this pious Prince. And herein also God de-
 “monstrated his singular Favour towards his Servant, because after
 “his Death, — agreeable to *his own most earnest Desire*, the Ta-
 “bernacle of his thrice blessed Soul was vouchsafed a place with
 “the Monument of the Apostles; and that it might be joined
 “with God’s People in the Church; and might be vouchsafed the
 “Divine Rights, and Mystick Service; and might enjoy a *Communion*
 “*of the Holy Prayers*.

This was but 12 years after the *Nicen Council*, and a great and
 most illustrious instance of the common received and settled Pra-
 ctice of that time. And here, before I proceed further, it is fit
 to consider, how far the continuance of that wicked and shameful
 Abuse by *Cranmer*, put upon the Church of *England* in his clau-
 destine Corruption of the *True English Liturgy*; I say, the Conti-
 nuance of it to this day, whether by supine Negligence, or base
 Compliance with a Faction of Sectaries, be consistent with that
 Profession of Reverence to Antiquity in general; and to those first
 four General Councils in particular, which is made by all who
 pretend to be genuine Sons of the Church of *England*? with their
 use of the *Constantinopolitan Creed* in the most solemn Office, so
 foully deformed, contrary to the Publick Office at that time used
 in the Church, and attested by *S. Cyril*, Bishop of *Hierusalem*, who
 was present at that Council, and a principal Man there? How
 consistent with the Statutes of most ancient Colleges in both the
 Universities, and the Oaths taken by so many Scholars for the
 Observance of them? How consistent with the Belief of One
 Holy

Holy Catholick Church; and of the Communion of Saints? with that Reverence and Respect, which the Holy Scriptures require should be paid to the Body of Christ, the Depository of Christian Verities, and the Pillar or Monument and Basis of Truth? with that Reverence, and Honour, and Esteem, which all true and genuine Christians cannot but have for so many glorious Saints as flourished in the Church of Christ, and all agreed in this pious Practice for more than 1200 years from the time of *Constantine*, who himself was none of the least, being converted in an extraordinary manner by special Vision from our Saviour, and the Truth thereof confirmed by very remarkable Victories, and afterward so great a Promoter of Christian Piety, that he was, as *Eusebius* relates, partaker of the Apostles appellation, being called *ισαπ6στολ6*, in the Offices of the *Greek Church*, and deservedly: How it can be consistent therewith, and with Christian Modesty, to set up a *Calvin*, a *Bucer*, a *Crammer*, an *Usher*, like little Idols, above all; and not rather an undeniable proof of the very Spirit of Hereticks and Schismatics.

Mr. **Baxter's Questions* in another Case, not unlike this, may very properly be proposed to our modern Opposers of this Catholick Practice: *Would they have held Communion with the Catholick Church for a Thousand Years together? Or would they not, if they had lived in those times? If they would, then why not with us, who are of the same Judgment? Was it a Duty then? And is it unlawful now? If they would not in all those Ages have held Communion with the visible Church, what would they have done but separated from the Body, and so from the Head, and cast off Christ in all his Members, and taken him to be a Head without a Body, which is no Head; and so no Christ? What would they have done, but denied his Power, and Love, and Truth, and consequently his Redemption; and his Office? Hath he come at the end of 4000 years since the Creation, to redeem the World, that lay so long in Darkness? And hath he made such wonderful Preparations for his Church, by his Life and Miracles, and Blood and Spirit? &c. and promised, That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it; and that his Kingdom shall be an Everlasting Kingdom, and his Dominion endureth from Generation to Generation; and yet, after all this, shall he have a Church, (even as the Seekers say) but for an Age or two? Thus Mr. Baxter; and very good: but if this be good in the Case of Baptism of Infants, why not as good in the Case of Prayers and Oblations for the Dead? which, I think, hath as good*

* *Life Appendix, p. 55.*

Evidence of Apostolical Original as that, or the Lord's-Day, or Episcopacy, or a good part of the Scriptures of the New Testament: And if they stand all upon the same Foundation, why should they not stand or fall together?

There is also an *Affertion of St. Augustin's*, which deserves to be here considered in this Case; That ** what the Universal Church doth hold, and was not instituted in Councils, but always retained, is most rightly believed to have been delivered by no other than Apostolical Authority.* For as this is a Practice which none did ever pretend was instituted by any Council; so amongst all, who have written concerning the Original, or first Invention, or Introduction of things, none has ever assigned any Original of it in the Catholick Church later than the Apostles; or in any part of the Catholick Church, later than of the rest of Christianity it self. So that could we trace it no further back than the time of *Constantine*, it would be unreasonable to believe, that the whole Christian Church, so largely spread over the Face of the Earth, and planted by so many several Persons at first, and in Places so divided and remote one from another, should so unanimously agree in such a Practice, did it not proceed from some *Common Cause*; which could be no other than the *Mutual Agreement* of all the Apostles in it.

* *Quod universa tenet Ecclesia, nec in Conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi Auctoritate Apostolica traditum rectissime creditur. cont. Donat. l. 4. c. 24.*

* *Nostra quidem Scripta cur ignibus meruerunt dari? Cur immaniter Conventicula dirui? in quibus Summus oratur Deus, Pax cunctis & venia postulatur, Magistratibus, Exercitibus, Regibus Familiaribus, Inimicis, ad huc vitam degentibus, & resolutis corporum vincione. lib. 4. suo. ff.*

But tho' this might be sufficient, yet have we *further Evidence* to trace it, even through the more troublesome times of the Churches, so near to the Apostles, that no Man, without Disparagement to his Judgment, or his Honesty, can question its Original to be indeed Apostolical. For tho' those troublesome times have left us so few Monuments of the Primitive Christianity, in comparison, that all will hardly equal the Writings of some one of the Writers of after-Ages; yet among those few have we what is sufficient. *Arnobius*, an eminent Professor of Rhetorick, who had been a bitter Enemy against the Christians, even in the time of Persecution under *Dioclesian* turned Christian, and wrote Seven Books against the *Gentiles*: in the fourth of which he expostulates with them in this manner: *Why have our Scriptures deserved to be cast into the Fire? Why our Meeting-Places to be cruelly destroyed, in which the Great God is prayed to, Peace and Pardon is besought for all; for Magistrates, Armies, Kings, our Familiars and Enemies; for those yet living, and those released from the Bond of their Bodies? Where he speaks of Prayers for these last, as as common as for any of the rest.* About 50 years before this was *S. Cyprian Bishop of Carthage*,

rhage, a Person of great Worth, and most deserved Reputation in the Church, and at last a Holy Martyr. He in his LXVI Epistle (with his Collegues in Council) tells the Clergy and People, to whom he wrote, that their Predecessors, upon religious Consideration, as a necessary Provision, had decreed, That no Christian Brother at his Departure should name a Clergy-Man for Guardian, or Executor; and that if any one should do this, there should be * *no Offering for him, nor Sacrifice celebrated for his Departure; for he doth not deserve to be named at the Altar of God in the Prayer of the Priests, who would call away the Priests and Ministers from the Altar:* And therefore since one Victor, † *contrary to the Order lately made in Council by the Priests, had presumed to constitute a certain Precbyter for a Guardian, || there should no Oblation be made among them for his Departure, or any Deprecation commonly used in the Church in his Name, that the Decree of the Bishops religiously and necessarily made might be observed by them, and Example given to others, &c.* This Prohibition of those things to be done, by way of Punishment, is a plain Evidence of what was accustomed, and should have been done, if there had been no Prohibition: and an Evidence not of a single Person, but of a Council: and not of Matter of Opinion, but of plain Matter of Fact; and that so notorious, as was well known to all, and of such Importance in the Opinion of all, as the Prohibition was adjudged a competent Punishment for such a Crime, as they all thought no little one: It was a kind of Excommunication.

Another fifty years before this lived *Tertullian*, a Man of very great and universal Learning, very acute Parts, and very strict for Discipline, and for the Orders of the Church. He mentions this Practice in divers of his Writings, not only as common and usual, but also as delivered by Tradition, and so well known, and unquestionable, as to be it self an undeniable Instance and Proof of unwritten Traditions. This he doth in his Book *de Corona Militis*, §. 3. where, amongst the Instances which he alleadgeth for proof of the Authority of unwritten Traditions, this is one: *Oblationes pro Defunctis, pro Natalitiis, annua die facimus.* We make Oblations for the Dead upon the Annual day of their Departure; which the Ancient Christians called their *Natalitia*, or Birth-Days. And after all concludes, * *If of these, and other Matters of Discipline, you seek for a Rule of Scriptures, you shall find none: Tradition is alleadged for the Author, Custom for the Confirmer, and Faith for the Observer.*

* Si quis hoc fecisset, non esset reus pro eo, nec sacrificium pro Dormitione ejus celebraretur. Neque enim, &c.

† Contra formam nuper in Concilio à sacerdotibus datam.

|| Non est quod pro Dormitione ejus apud vos fiat Oblatio, aut Deprecatio aliqua nomine ejus in Ecclesia frequentetur.

* Harum & aliarum ejusmodi disciplinarum & Legem expostules Scripturarum, nullam invenies: Traditio tibi præstenditur auctrix, Consuetudo confirmatrix, & Fides observatrix.

* Et pro anima (jus orat,
& Refrigerium interim
adpostulat ei,
& in prima
Resurrectione Consortium;
& offert annuis diebus
dormitionis eius. § 10.

† Et jam repete apud
Deum pro
cujus Spiritu postules.
pro qua Oblationes
Annuas reddas. Stabis
ergo ad Deum cum
tot Uxoribus, quot illa
oratione commemoras?
& offeres pro duabus,
& commemoras illas duas
per sacerdotem de Monogamia
ob pristinum de virginitate
sanctitum, circumdatum
virginibus & univiris?
& ascendet sacrificium
tuum libera fronte?
& inter ceteras voluntates
bonæ mentis postulatis tibi,
& uxori castitatem: § 11

Observer. But of Traditions in general he hath other Discourses
elsewhere: and of this particular Tradition, which he does but
only mention here, as an instance of Fact not to be denied, we
have farther mention in other of his Writings; In his Book *de*
Monogamia, against second Marriages, speaking of the Custom of
the Widow's praying for her deceased Husband; he says, * "She
prays for his Soul, and intreats for Refreshment for him in the
interim, and Comfort in the first Resurrection, and offers (for
him) on the Annual days of his Departure. Again, in his
Book *de Exhortatione Castitatis*, he thus upbraids him who had had
several Wives: † "Say before God for whose Spirit thou dost
pray, for which thou dost make thy Annual Oblations. Wilt
thou therefore stand before God with so many Wives, as thou
dost in that Prayer remember; and offer for two, and com-
memorate those two by a Priest once married, by reason of the an-
cient Sanction of Virginity, encompassed with Virgins, and once
married Women? And will thy Sacrifice ascend with Confidence?
and amongst other Habits of a good Soul, wilt thou pray for
Chastity for thy self, and thy Wife?

This, I think, is plain, and full for the common Practice, both
in private, and in publick by the Priest at the Altar; and for the
Tradition. But it is *objected*, that *Tertullian*, when he wrote
these Books, was a *Montanist*, and wrote them against the Church.
And it is as easily *answered*, that it is not Matter of Opinion, but
Matter of Fact, for which they are here alleadged: and it is cer-
tain he was no Fool; which he must have been, if this had been
the Practice of the *Montanists*, and not of the Church. But for
the Readers better Information, and more ample Satisfaction, that
the Objection is a meer Scarecrow, and serves only to discover the
Disingenuity and Inconsiderateness of the Objectors, he must know,
That *Montanus*, (and his Companions) *Alcibiades* and *Theodorus*,
were at first looked upon, in the Opinion of most Men, as *Pro-*
phets: For very many Miracles of Divine Grace at that time
wrought in many Churches made most Men believe that they
also were Prophets. *Euseb. 5. Hist. 3.* So that if *Tertullian* did
believe this, it was no more than what most others did. But what
more specially inclined him to favour *Montanus* was this: He was
a Man of great Austerity and Strictness in Matters of Discipline,
Penance, Fasting, Chastity, Suffering, &c. which were things which
Montanus asserted, and highly pretended to: And that which fixed
him

him in his Opinion of *Montanus*, was some unhappy Contests which arose between him and the *Roman* Clergy, about some of these things, which gave him that Offence, that he not only reflects upon them in his *de Corona Militis*; *Novi & Pastores eorum*, &c. but afterwards in his other Writings frequently calls them *Psychici*, Animal or Sensual Man. And this, which is observable in his Writings, is also affirmed by *S. Hierom.* This was his * *Montanism*. And what is this to the Prejudice of his Testimony concerning Prayers for the Dead? It is so far from that, that it is the greatest Confirmation and Amplification of it, that this Practice and Tradition was no part of *Montanism*: for nothing could have been a greater Prejudice to the Church of *Rome* against it, and it had certainly been condemned by them: nor peculiar to the *African* Church; but the known Practice of the Catholick Church, and of the *Roman* Church in particular: quite contrary to what the Objectors would persuade us. But such *Insatinations* are the greatest of Men subject to, when they will obstinately persist in the Maintenance of an ill Cause. We may here therefore fix, upon as good ground as can reasonably be desired, this Practice and Tradition of the Catholick Church.

* For as to what relates to the Rule of Faith that is, to the Principal Doctrines of Religion, Tertul. and the first Montanists were of the same Opinion with the Church, &c. saith Du Pin p. 82, 83.

And now it is time to consider how much we are short in our Evidence of the Apostles Age; and from what Original this Practice did in truth proceed. It is agreed that *St. John* wrote his Gospel about the beginning of the second Century; and that *Tertullian* fell to the Sect of *Montanus* in the beginning of the third. *Vid. Du Pin*, p. 44. and p. 70. And *S. Hierom* informs us, that he lived to a great Age, *usque ad decrepitam aetatem*; and that after he had continued *usque ad mediam aetatem* a Presbyter of the Church, *invidia postea & contumeliis Clericor. Romana Ecclesie ad Montani dogma delapsus*. * So that he lived the greatest and best part of his Life in the same Age wherein *St. John* wrote his Gospel, and did live some time. And here comes, as seasonably as unexpectedly, to my hand, at the very instant that this is at the Press, a Book of a learned Opponent; who seeing this too plain to be dissimbled, and supposing that he can otherwise evade the force of this Evidence, presents us with a plain Confession of the Matter of Fact; † *David Blondell*: "I make no difficulty (saith he) to affirm; that it might be practised some time before the Year 200, in as much as *Tertullian*, the most ancient of all those that say any thing of it, numbred it even then among the Customs

* After having continued in the Church 40 or 45 Years, he separated from it in the beginning of the 3d Century, &c. saith Du Pin, p. 70.
† Of the *Sibyls*, l. 2. c. 23.

"received.

* The same is
confessed by
Belen Daller,
since recom-
mended to me,
as one who
hath written
learnedly on
this Subject:
but I find not
any thing in
him added to
Blunder, but
such Pride,
Arrogance,
Insolence, Con-
tempt, and re-
proachful Ex-
pressions of the
Ancient Holy
Christians &
Marjrs, as
cannot but be
very offensive
to any true
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rit being most
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anity.

“received in his time, writing in the Year, 199. *Oblationes pro Defunctis, pro Natalitiis, annua die facimus, &c.* and recites also the other two Testimonies, only in that *de Monogamia*, mistakes the Husband for the Wife, and then adds: “From the things which this great Person, the most Ancient, and most Learned of all the Latines, that we have remaining, does advance, as to Matter of Fact, concerning the Oblations, which were publickly made, and the Employment of the Priests, the only Ministers of the publick Service, as a thing Ordinary, and grown into Custom, it is manifest, that Praying for the Dead was, in his Time, used, not only by particular Persons, but also in the Body of the Church, and that the Liturgies thereof were full of it. Thus we see, not only by plain Proof, but also by the * Confession of a learned Adversary, that this was not only a *Practice* in the Church when *Tertullian* wrote, but a *Received Custom* in his time, and therefore of some standing before; and of such standing as he knew no other Original of it but Apostolical Tradition: and for such doth he alledge it; and not only so, but for an unquestionable Proof of such unwritten Traditions; as this Author also confesseth and asserts. cap. 24. p. 142. And what other Original could it have in that little time, and such a Man as he have been ignorant of it? And had any other been known, could He have been guilty of so great Weakness, as to have alleaged this for an unquestionable Proof in such a Case, if he had had so little Honesty?

But we have here a learned Man, who under pretence of detecting an Imposture, presumes, by his Learning, to impose upon the World. How well he hath used his Learning in other Matters, some Learned Men of the Church of *England*, I think, besides others, have sufficiently shewed; and how far his Judgment is to be relied upon. In this I shall shew the like in a word. He would persuade that not only *Tertullian*, but the whole Church of Christ, hath been imposed upon in this Matter by a counterfeit *Sibyl*, written between the Years 138 and 151. and of *Tertullian* saith positively, “That he relied upon no other Hypothesis than those proposed by the Author of the pretended *Sibylline* Writings. But in these few words there is no less than at least one notorious Fallacy, and two Falsities: a Fallacy in the word *Hypothesis*: for he relied not upon any Hypothesis, but upon the received Custom of the Church: And that he did rely upon, as is confessed: But he did not in the least rely upon any thing at all of the pretended *Sibyl*: Nor hath this

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Champion produced, I think, any one Proof that either *Tertullian*, or any other of the Ancient or Modern Christians, did at all rely upon any such Authority for that Practice: but all unanimously relied upon Tradition from the Apostles. His whole Book is full of Fallacy and Deceit, and of the very Spirit and Genius of an Heretick, who makes no scruple to abuse the whole Church of Christ, and the most Excellent Persons in it, to maintain his own Principles. It is certain, that divers of the great Truths of Christianity were known to the *Gentiles* long before, and received by Tradition from the Common Parents of Mankind; but received as Articles of Faith by Christians upon the Authority of Christ and his Apostles: And such was this, which he fathers upon an Impostor, and pretends the Church received it from him; without any Proof of either, whereas, if he was a Christian, it is much more likely that he received the Hypothesis from the Practice of the Church at that time; and is therefore rather an Evidence of it. Other matters of this Book have been considered by learned Men of our own Country; and I think I need say no more of this with any regard to him.

But as to the Practice, besides all this *positive and Affirmative Evidence*, I do deny that any competent Evidence can be produced, among all the Churches of the World, of any where the Christian Religion was planted without it, or where it was introduced by any particular Person, upon any special Occasion, at any different time, after the first planting of Christianity there, in all those Ages since the Apostles; being verily persuaded that no such thing can be produced, but what will strongly confirm and illustrate the contrary Evidence; like Mr. *Usher's Flourish* with his most ancient Manuscript *Missals*, wherein the Commemoration of the Dead doth no where appear, which yet were but two in all, if not all but one mentioned by two several Authors, and that no compleat Missal neither, but only *Liber Sacramentorum*, an Abstract, and it self at last not to be found, as his expression, *habebatur*, seems to imply: a good Argument of the Agreement of all, or most others in that particular, that so industrious a Searcher into ancient Records and Monuments of Antiquity, of that kind especially, could neither see nor hear of any other, either at home or abroad, wherein it was not. Such another Exception may perhaps be met with, which may serve to confirm the general Rule; but not any thing considerable, I believe, to any other purpose. Certain it is, it must
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either have been settled in all those several Places in the World, where Churches were planted, together with the rest of the Christian Doctrines and Institutions; and then it must have proceeded from the same Founders, who agreed as unanimously in this, as they did in other necessary things; of which sort this may therefore be concluded to be one: or it must have had a several distinct particular Introduction by it self, in all or most of those several Places, and be derived from several Authors, Originals, Occasions and Times: and then the Accounts of its special and particular Introduction, in all probability, would have very much varied in several places, at least have remained upon Record, or by Tradition in some. But not a word of any such thing, can I find, that was ever heard of in any part of the World; but a Unanimous Agreement in all, both in the Practice continued by Custom, and Original by Tradition from the Apostles.

And thus much for Proof *à posteriori*, from Evidence of Matter of Fact; which I think enough to satisfy any reasonable Man of competent Ability, and to convince any Man of Modesty and Sincerity: yet because simple genuine *Truth* is always consistent with all that is such, it may, *ex abundanti*, gratify an honest ingenuous Reader to observe briefly the *Universal Agreement* of this Catholick Practice of the Church of Christ, 1. With common Reason, and the Nature of things: 2. With the common Sentiments of the Primitive Christians concerning the middle State of Souls: 3. With divers plain Texts of the Holy Scriptures: And 4. with the common Practice of the *Jews* in and before our Saviour's time, never reprehended by him, or any of his Apostles, and therefore allowed by all, and indeed practised by them: and, on the contrary, the Inconsistence of the obstinate Opposition with Truth and Justice in divers respects.

As for *Common Reason*: The Universe is of vast and uncomprehensible extent; in it we see are many great Bodies, Orbs, and Regions; the Life of Man upon this of the Earth is very short; the Time from the Resurrection of our Saviour to this is near 1700 years, and how much more it may be to the General Judgment no Mortal knows; in the mean time the Souls of Mortals go out of their Bodies in infinitely various States of Purity and Impurity: And certainly it is most reasonable that there should be, not only one general Distinction of Souls, but moreover many distinct Places, States, and Conditions, wherein the separate Souls are disposed, according

according to their several Qualifications, when they go out of the Body. And as that curious Observer of the Works of Nature, as well of the Holy Scriptures, the late Lord Chief Justice *Hale*, speaking of towardly Plants by Death transplanted into another Region, a Garden of Happiness and Comfort, adds: "And possibly by continuance of time, as they received Improvement and Perfection here, so in that other Region they add to their Degrees of Perfection, and are promoted to farther Accessions, and Degrees, and Stations of Happiness and Glory, till they come to the State of Spirits of just Men made perfect. Now in all these Varieties of States is there nothing capable of receiving Benefit by the Prayers of the Living? Is there no Communion of Saints between those in the Body, and those out of the Body? But if there be, how can it better be exercised or expressed than in the solemn Offices of the Church?"

For the *Common Sentiments of the Primitive Christians*, because it would be too long to recite so many Testimonies in this place, and they are collected already to my hand by *Sixtus Senensis* and others, I need but refer the Reader to them. But this also is confessed and asserted by *Blondel* and *Dalle*; but they would have us believe that they received them from an Impostor, a Counterfeit *Sibyl*, a groundless, impudent and impious Calumny.

The Agreement with *plain Scriptures* is observable in that expression of our Saviour concerning the Sin which shall not be forgiven, neither in this World, neither in the World to come, *Mat.* 12. 32. and that which agrees with this, of being cast into Prison, and not coming out by any means, till Payment of the last Farthing, *Mat.* 5. 25. Prisoners of Hope, *Zechar.* 9. 11, 12. Sins blotted out when the times of Refreshing shall come, *Act.* 3. 19. Such as shew the Uncertainty of many Souls in their separate State, even such as were Professors of a high Form in this World, of what their final Doom shall be at that Day, as *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. and 25. 44, 45. &c. And the Recompence of Rewards at that day, *2 Thess.* 1. 6, 7. *1 Cor.* 5. 5. *Luk.* 14. 14. *2 Tim.* 4. 8. &c. Which if our confident Opposers had sufficiently considered, one would think they should not have presumed to make so light of that middle State, as for the maintaining of Parties to deprive so many Souls there of all Benefit they might receive by their surviving Friends here; which many *Apparitions*, even among Protestants, do frequently signify.

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The *Practice of the Jews* I have noted already, and shall add only here, That in Discourse lately with one of them, he assured me that the *Form* they now use for that purpose is generally believed by all to have been composed by *St. Peter* and the *Great Congregation*. I there also remembered an Instance of the *Practice of the Apostles* themselves in *St. Paul's Prayer for Onesiphorus*, in such a *Form* as is hardly to be met with for any Person living, however, proves it not in vain to Pray for any Person, of whom there is Hope, but not Certainty, till that day. So that tho' our great Man, with more Confidence, I doubt, than Conscience, and without any Proof or Reason at all, doth positively affirm him then living, p. 210. he gets nothing at all by it.

Thus we see in this a Universal Agreement in all things: but, on the contrary, if we examine the *Obstinate Opposition* of it throughout, we shall find nothing solid and consistent in it; neither with Truth, nor Honesty, nor any good Consequence: but a plausible Pretence of the Pure Word of God to cover an impure Inclination and Desire to set aside the Authority which God instituted, and set up themselves and their own Conceits in the place of it. 2. Inconsistent with itself; first, denying or cavilling at the Antiquity or Universality of the Practice; and then, when they thought they had found out an Evasion, confessing that, which they could no longer for shame deny, and betaking themselves to their new Invention: 3. Inconsistent with the Sincerity, Simplicity and Ingenuity of the Gospel; in their shameless Shuffles, Cavils and Evasions, of which I have noted divers; and many more might be observed; but there is one not to be omitted here; their alledging the Writings of *Epiphanius*, *Chrysostome*, *Augustin*, and others, against not only their own, but the confessed ancient Practice of the Church in their time, in this Case; inconsistent with that Modesty, Respect and Decency which the Gospel requires toward all, in their Censuring as *delirious*, not only some particular Persons, but generally all the most Holy, Ancient Christians, in what was their common Sentiments, and is believed by the most learned of the Church of England to be plainly taught in the Holy Scriptures: 5. Inconsistent with that Reverence and Regard that Christians should have for the Honour of the Church of Christ, his Promises to it, and Care of it, in so foul and scandalous an Imputation, as that they received their common Notions of the present State of separate Souls in the other World from an Impostor; which, was not their Impudence therein as notorious as it is groundless, and destitute of any proof at all, might prove a Tentation to unsettled Souls, to suspect all to be no better: And for other Consequences, it is plain they lead the way to all others to reject their own usurped Authority with the same Ease and Impudence that they do that of the Church of Christ; and to set up their own Conceits against theirs, and pretend Scripture for it; and so to an endless Course of Separations, Schisms, Sects and Confusions; and, in conclusion, set up that Authority over others, which they themselves in the mean time reject; as by their *Synod of Dort*, and others in France appears: And besides all this, it is much to be feared, that they lead multitudes of Souls into that miserable Secrecy and Presumption, wherewith our Saviour hath acquainted us that many will find themselves deceived at that day, *Mat. 7. 22*. And therefore if these be not pertinacious Schismatics and Hereticks, speaking perverse things to draw away Disciples after them, and therefore carefully to be avoided, I know not who are, or what so many Cautions in the Scripture to that purpose do signify.

